

My name is Lois Leibrand, I am a registered nurse currently working and living in Scobey, MT

I regret that due to prior comments, I can not be in Helena today to present my public comment to you. I have asked Lisa Stroh to please read my statement.

I have for years been an advocate for children. I grew up the big sister to three younger siblings , in which I had a strong influence over their upbringing. My husband and I have three grown children, along with 5 grandchildren. I have owned and operated a licensed daycare in the state of. Montana. I am now a registred nurse and also have been a mandatory reporter for years.. So you could say I have spent my entire life working with children. And I have to tell you -- I will always believe the innocent and truthful word of a child.

Our children and elderly are our most vulnerable population and they are slipping through huge cracks in our efforts to protect them this is quite evident by what the media has brought to our attentions over the past year in Montana.. These children are our future govenors, senators , legislators, school teachers, doctors , nurses, mothers and fathers.. This list is endless.. but first they need to be protected so that they will be able to grow ip in this society, reach adult hood and be able to become out nest generation of leaders.

I have had a few dealings with DFCS over the past 9 month. Phone calls come from concerned citizens, neighbors, grandparents, friends and parents. The greater share of these people have tried to make phone calls, have tried to reach DCFS, have tried to call Central Intake but are so frustrated that they do not know what avenue to persue anymore and some just give up.. know that these children are still at great risk but feel as though no one will listen or even cares are these abused or neglected children.

On one occasion I received a phone call from an aunt who was concerned about the welfare of her nieces . She had contacted Central Intake and , DCFS, but felt like she only got the run around.. She did contact the police department as to at least have this problem on record and by doing this was able to get help locally.. I made a phone call to Central Intake also about this. Central Intake wanted to know how I knew this was a problem, who told me, wanted the ages of the children which I did not know, wanted to know all about how I know of the problem, instead of a lot of details about what the problem really was.. I found this very frustrating as CI would not even tell me if this would get investigated or not.. I could not imagine how they could just not see any urgency to a child pornography issue... and did not give me any satisfaction that this issue would even be investigated. I only received some type of recognition after I mentioned the name of October Perez.. Then it seems like anyone in a DFCS office or Central intake will take a phone call seriously..

On another occasion- I had a phone call from a concerned friend of a grandmother . The grandmother had been trying for months to get her grandson out of the house.. After a lengthy conversation with the grandmother I told her she needed to once again report this to DCFS.. She even told me that the child's teacher had wanted to report this issue to DCFS, but the teacher was told that this is best handles

by the family and notto involve the school... Is is pathetic that the schools, who are also mandatory

reporters do nto want to get involved and this is how they instruct teachers to NOT get involved.. in this case the 8 year old boy begged is grandmother to fight for him.. His words were" Grandma how come you won't fight for me?: After listening to this grandmothers story I attempted to contact DCFS. No one was in the office to take my call.. I left message after message, begging a case worker to call me

back.. I called Central Intake, but once again did not feel like I was taken seriously.. I then sent an email to the head of the DCFS office. After the email I did receive a phone call from the DFCS, only after

mentioning the name of October Perez. This case has been investigated, according to the Grandmother.

And now the case is closed, much to the surprising horror of the grandmother. The grandmother tells me " You will bereading about this one some day" The grandson says " Someday when you are grown up you don't have to be scared of your parents, right grandma?"

These^{are} only a couple of issues I have received phone calls for, others have been reported to each appropriate office, some are investigated , some never have been.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to the concerns from the citizens of Montana.. i trust that the interim committee will take issues of most importance when dealing with the children of the state of Montana. There definitely is a need for legislative changes in our state.. Let us as citizens of this state work together to make this a great place in which to raise our children and grandchildren. I am willing to work with legislators to get the needed bills passed in the next legislative session..

Lois Leibrand

Box 485

Scobey, MT 59263

487-5017 or 783-7310